

SENATE RESOLUTION 12
By Haynes

A RESOLUTION to designate former Senator Anna Belle Clement O'Brien as Chair Emeritus of the Senate Democratic Caucus.

WHEREAS, we honor a woman who has graced the State Capitol with her presence for the last forty years and taught us all to look for the beauty in politics--the first lady of Tennessee politics, Miss Anna Belle Clement O'Brien; and

WHEREAS, her dedication to the Democratic Party of Tennessee has been evident throughout her life, having been told at an early age by her mother to be a "good Baptist and a Democrat!"; and

WHEREAS, she comes from the most distinguished family in Tennessee Democratic history, the Clement family, which has produced statesmen and stateswomen who have served Tennessee in every level of government; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Tennessee first became acquainted with Miss Anna Belle as a campaign operative when her brother, Frank Goad Clement, was elected Governor in 1952 and the Clement family political dynasty was born; and

WHEREAS, Miss Anna Belle started her public service career in 1955 as an assistant to future Governor Buford Ellington who was then serving as commissioner of the department of agriculture under Governor Clement; and

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WHEREAS, upon the election of Buford Ellington to the office of governor she served as his executive assistant, and upon the re-election of Frank Clement she was her brother's first appointment as his administrative assistant, making her the first female chief of staff to the Governor in Tennessee history; and

WHEREAS, in his last inaugural address Governor Frank Clement said, "There must be a constant movement toward a higher, and nobler and better way of life", and working side by side with her brother Miss Anna Belle was instrumental in the outstanding achievements and legacy of the Clement Administration: free textbooks for Tennessee's school children; healthcare for the poor; the creation of programs for our youth; and humane treatment and care of the mentally ill and equality for all people; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, with a desire to return to public service to help the handicapped children of Tennessee, she ran for and won election to the Tennessee House of Representatives on a platform of education, rural roads, mental healthcare and helping the handicapped; and

WHEREAS, in 1976, once again using her campaign slogan of "About our district, she will tell, Let's elect Miss Anna Belle!" she won election to the Tennessee State Senate as only the second woman in state history to win a senate seat; and

WHEREAS, in moments of heated debate, of frayed nerves and high emotions, the gracious lady from Cumberland County has sought recognition and stood on the Senate floor to speak calming words that rang of conviction and necessity--to do the right thing, to remember the less fortunate, to be fair and to remind us in our prosperity that it has not always been so with Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in 1982 the Senate Democratic Caucus turned to her when seeking a worthy opponent to the Governor then in office and Miss Anna Belle blazed the trail for many women in Tennessee to run for higher office; and

WHEREAS, while running for Governor she simultaneously chaired the Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study, from which came the education reform movement that was otherwise known as the "Better Schools Program"; and

WHEREAS, during her service as chair of the Senate Education Committee and the Joint Oversight Committee on Education she helped oversee the most comprehensive and dynamic reform of classroom education in the history of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Maybelle Clement always advised her daughter to be a Baptist and be a good Democrat so, Senator O'Brien obeyed her mother and in 1994 became the chair of the Senate Democratic Caucus; and has tirelessly campaigned statewide for Democratic candidates; and

WHEREAS, Senator O'Brien has been called by colleagues the most effective legislator in Nashville and has proven time and again that when an issue is important to her district she will go the distance to see that goal achieved, that highway built, or that program funded: as Lieutenant Governor John Wilder says "She is committed and she is involved."; and

WHEREAS, it is now highly appropriate that we honor Senator O'Brien for unflagging support and dedication to the state of Tennessee and its citizenry; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That in honor of her outstanding contributions to the Democratic Party of Tennessee and especially the Senate Democratic Caucus we hereby designate Senator Anna Belle Clement O'Brien as Chair Emeritus of the Senate Democratic Caucus.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.